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AUTHOR Gelles, Richard J.; Cornell, Claire Pedrick
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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews a sampling of the literature on child abuse, spouse abuse, and family violence from around the world. The 72 books, journal articles, newspaper articles, and legislative reports which are included cover the period 1960-1981. A section on where family violence research has been conducted includes studies on child abuse and neglect from Great Britain, Africa, and western European countries; in the area of spouse abuse, studies cited are from Great Britain and Canada. A table is included which indicates publications on family violence according to type of violence. A section on the definitions of family violence includes materials from Great Britain, European countries, Scandinavia, Australia, Third World nations, Japan, and India. The methods which family violence researchers use are detailed, indicating that survey research and quasi-experimental designs are the most common form for child abuse research; survey research is the most common method for spouse abuse research. Theories which underlie family violence research are discussed including the social/structural models which are used in foreign countries more than in the United States. A section devoted to what we know about family violence in other countries covers the existence and extent of the problem and the factors associated with family violence. (AG)

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILY VIOLENCE*

Richard J. Gelles and Claire Pedrick Cornell

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

University of Rhode Island

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

There has been a tendency among those concerned with child abuse, wife abuse, and family violence to assume that the problem of violence is greater in the United States than in other countries. This belief, held by some social scientists and much of the general public and mass media, is partially rooted in a kind of reverse ethnocentrism. The last 20 years has witnessed a virtual explosion of public and scientific interest in the subjects of child abuse, spouse abuse, and family violence. There has been a geometric increase in scientific and periodical literature on all forms of violence between intimates (Nelson, 1978). The growth in literature on, and attention to, family violence has convinced researchers and many members of the general public that family violence is not rare and confined to mentally ill or socially marginal families. Thus, our awareness of violence between family members in the United States, combined with an apparent lack of awareness of violence in families in other cultures, has led many people to assume that family violence, if not unique to American families, is at least more common in the United States than in other societies.

The reverse ethnocentric view of American family violence is unintentionally supported by socio-cultural explanations of family violence which include, as central variables, cultural attitudes about violence as expressive and instrumental acts. "Violence is as American as apple pie," the journalists tell us, and researchers find that there are powerful norms which accept the use of both societal and family violence in the United States (Straus et al., 1980).

It is, however, no more correct to assume that other countries have low or no family violence because there are no scholarly or journalistic

discussions of violence in those cultures, than it would be correct to assume that prior to the rise of public concern for violence in American families, American households were non-violent.

Not only is the claim that families in the United States are more violent than families in other societies unsubstantiated, but the very assumption that other countries are not aware of family violence is fallacious. There have been an increasing number of publications on family violence in other societies and a small number of cross-cultural comparison studies on various aspects of family violence have been conducted.

This paper reviews an extensive sampling of the literature on child abuse, spouse abuse, and family violence around the world. First, we examine where the research has been conducted and what has been studied (child abuse, spouse abuse, or family violence). The next section focuses on the similarities and differences in definitions of abuse and family violence. The types of research methods and the theoretical models used to study family violence in other cultures are then reviewed. These sections are then summarized in an analysis of what we know about family violence in other countries. We conclude with a discussion of how we can advance our understanding of family violence by pursuing cross-cultural research.

WHERE RESEARCH ON FAMILY VIOLENCE HAS BEEN CONDUCTED

Societies around the globe have begun to recognize that the family can be a potentially dangerous institution rather than the proverbial scene of love and tranquility. Research on family violence in countries other than the United States has sometimes been initiated by American

scholars who either choose to study violence in one society or who are involved in cross-cultural analyses of family violence. There is, however, a substantial literature on family violence authored by scholars who are studying violence and abuse in their own countries.

The development of literature on abuse and violence in other countries frequently parallels the development of interest in the United States. Just as we thought that family violence in the United States was rare and confined to pathological individuals and families, other societies also held the belief that violence was rare and that family peace and tranquility was the norm. However, changes in traditional ways of life, urbanization and industrialization have recently been identified as increasing the number of cases of child abuse and neglect in countries such as Greece, India, and Africa (Mahmood, 1978; Oyemade, 1980; Jinadu, 1980; Loening, 1981; Fraser and Kilbride, 1980; Maroulis, 1979). Of course, there were no base line data on abuse and neglect in these countries before there was scientific and public interest; but, the perceived growth of abuse and neglect and the perceived tie-in with other social changes helped to increase the amount of attention paid to family violence.

In some societies, such as Sweden, Greece, and Zululand, values which legitimized family violence for centuries are now being called into question (Olmesdahl, 1978; Maroulis, 1979; Vinocur, 1980). While in other countries, such as Germany and other Western European nations, although awareness of the problem existed, there were heavy taboos on the subject which hindered societal and scientific recognition (Haffner, 1977; Taylor and Newberger, 1979).

Child Abuse and Neglect Research

The largest number of international publications on child abuse and neglect research have been studies of abuse and neglect in Great Britain, Africa, and Western European countries. There have been systematic and controlled studies in Great Britain which focused on the medical and psychological consequences of abuse (Buchanan and Oliver, 1979; Lynch, 1978; Smith et al., 1973; Smith et al., 1973; Smith and Hanson, 1974). Additional articles on child abuse and neglect in Great Britain have discussed bonding failure as the cause of abuse (Lynch and Roberts, 1977), and management of child abuse and neglect cases (Speight et al., 1979). Studies in Africa focused on the hypothetical growth of the problem of child abuse as a consequence of the disruption of traditional clan life (Fraser and Kilbride, 1980; Loening, 1981). Neglect research in Africa discusses the problems of poverty and malnutrition that inhibit the optimal development of many African children (Jinadu, 1980; Loening, 1981; Rosendorf, 1981).

Scholars who have examined child abuse and neglect in Western Europe comment on the lack of awareness about child abuse (Tauber et al., 1977; Maroulis, 1979), but they also debate whether there should be concern and action just for victims of physical abuse, or whether concern should be broadened to all maltreated children (Kamerman, 1975).

Spouse Abuse

There is much less written on spouse abuse outside of the United States than there is on child abuse. This probably reflects the fact that awareness of spouse abuse followed concern for child abuse in the United States and other countries. There has been no extensive literature on spouse abuse in other countries, with the exception of Great Britain, which

Table 1

Publications on Family Violence

by Type of Violence Studied and Country or Region Studied

	Child Abuse	Spouse Abuse
Canada	3	4
Great Britain	15	5
West Germany	1	1
Scandinavian	4	0
Other Western European	6	1
Japan	0	2
Israel	1	0
Australia	3	0
India	2	1
Africa	6	1
Other Third World	2	0
Scotland	1	1

actually preceded the United States in both awareness of, and programs for battered women. The greatest amount of research on spouse abuse has been carried out in Great Britain and Canada (Freeman, 1978; Gayford, 1975; Byles, 1980; Schlessinger, 1980; Gerson, 1978; Pizzey, 1974).

Table 1 Here

DEFINING FAMILY VIOLENCE: INTERNATIONAL PATTERNS

Awareness of family violence varies from one society to the next, often depending on the political, social, economic, and cultural milieu of the country. Child abuse is recognized as a problem in the countries listed in the previous section, while modern China, Russia, Poland, and Japan claim that abuse of children is either non-existent or rare (Taylor and Newberger, 1979). Whether a country recognizes child abuse, wife abuse, or family violence often depends on the local definitions and priorities (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Taylor and Newberger, 1979). While the Swedish Parliament passed an anti-spanking law in 1978 (Vinocur, 1980), it is reported that in many Third World countries, children as young as six years of age work under unsanitary conditions for up to 16 hours per day (Rosendorf, 1981).

We encountered a wide variety of definitions, manifestations, and purported causes of family violence in the literature we examined. The enormous variation of definitions hampers definitive cross-cultural analysis of data on family violence. This section first briefly reviews the definitional problems of studying family violence in the United States, then reviews the range and pattern of definitions of child abuse and spouse abuse found in the cross-cultural literature.

Defining Abuse and Violence

A central problem of research on family violence in the United States is the range and diversity of definitions of child abuse, spouse abuse, and violence. The terms "abuse" and "violence" are not conceptually equivalent. In some instances, abuse refers to a subset of violent behavior--that which results in injury to the victim. An example is Kempe et al.'s (1962) definition of child abuse in which abuse was seen as a clinical condition (i.e. with diagnosable medical and physical symptoms) having to do with those who had been deliberately injured by physical assault. Straus et al.'s (1980) definition of child and wife abuse referred only to those acts of violence which had a high probability of causing injury to the victim.

Other definitions of child and wife abuse refer to mistreatment, including, but extending far beyond, acts of injurious violence. Malnourishment, failure to thrive, sexual abuse, and medical neglect are among the nonviolent phenomena included in many definitions of child abuse (Giovannoni and Becerra, 1979). Some definitions of wife abuse include nonviolent acts, such as rape or nonviolent sexual abuse, but the central definitional problem with wife abuse is the specification of acts of physical violence which are, and are not, considered abusive.

In short, while definitions of violence can refer to all forms of physical aggression, definitions of abuse can refer to only injurious physical aggression, or to a wide gamut of nonphysical maltreatment. Other dilemmas in defining abuse and violence concern issues of acts of commission vs. acts of omission (is abuse only an act of commission?); intent vs. non-intent (is abuse only an intentional act?); and whether abuse and violence are acts committed by individuals or institutions.

International Definitions of Child Abuse

The picture we were left with after examining the definitions of child abuse used by investigators studying abuse around the world is one of little consensus (as little as is found in the United States). We did, however, find some patterns, especially when we examined definitions employed in studies within one country or world region. Our analysis of child abuse definitions focused on three aspects of the definitions: (1) The range of behaviors considered abusive; (2) whether an abusive act had to be intentional; and (3) the level of analysis of the definitions (individual, organizational, or societal/institutional).

Great Britain. Of the materials we reviewed, the largest amount of published research on child abuse was from Great Britain. Those who focused on abuse in Great Britain had as their primary concern the physical abuse of children (Guthkelch, 1971; Smith et al., 1973; Smith et al., 1973; Smith and Hanson, 1974; Oliver, 1975; Bamford, 1976; Rogers et al., 1976; Hyman, 1977; Lynch, 1978; Miniford, 1981). But, as would be expected in this area of study, some investigators did examine the broader manifestations of abuse, including neglect (Speight et al., 1979; Buchanan and Oliver, 1979) and children at risk (Lynch and Roberts, 1977; Roberts and Hawton, 1980).

From an examination of the literature of abuse in Great Britain, one finds no agreement as to whether abuse is limited to intentional acts or whether intent is relevant at all to a definition of abuse. Approximately half of the publications on abuse explicitly state or imply that intentionality is a necessary component of a definition of child abuse, while the other half do not specify intent as a part of the definition. Of interest is the fact that of those reports which do not specify intent as a component

of a definition of abuse, nearly all were medical studies focusing on the physical outcomes of child abuse.

All the definitions of child maltreatment in the literature on child abuse in Great Britain viewed child abuse as acts of violence or mistreatment committed by one individual against a child. None of the studies examined or even defined abuse as acts committed by organizations (e.g. police, medical, group homes) or societal institutions (e.g. by means of social policies which are harmful to children).

European Countries. Kamerman (1975) reports that definitions of child abuse vary from one European country to the next, depending upon the cultural perceptions towards children and the perceived extent of child abuse in their respective countries. We also find no evidence of consistent definitions of abuse from the research reports on child maltreatment in countries such as Italy, France, West Germany, Poland, and Yugoslavia.

Most of the reports fail to distinguish between acts of physical abuse and acts of neglect. Although investigators who examined child abuse in France and Germany provide "loose" definitions of abuse, they appear to be undecided as to whether abuse should be addressed as a conceptually distinct issue or whether the main focus of concern should be on all victimized children, irrespective of the form of maltreatment (Kamerman, 1975).

The research reports evidence the variation in societal concern for child abuse in European countries. Poland apparently recognizes the existence of child abuse, but does not regard it as a serious problem (Kamerman, 1975). Yugoslavia and Italy appear to be minimally concerned with the issue of child abuse (Kamerman, 1975), and Yugoslavia does not even distinguish abuse from the general issue of "pre-delinquency."

The issue of intent was not discussed at all by those writing on abuse in European countries (in contrast to the partial concern shown with this aspect of the definition in Great Britain).

European definitions of abuse also contrast with the definitions used in Great Britain in terms of the level of analysis to which the definition is applied. Most studies on abuse in Europe view abuse as a consequence of societal policies which sanction or lead to deficits in the optimal development of children. For example, in Maroulis's study in Greece, abuse was seen as a condition caused by societal change (1979), while Tauber et al.'s study in Italy traces the causes of abuse to society's lack of social awareness of the problem (1977).

Scandinavia. Child abuse is not generally seen as an overwhelming problem in Scandinavian countries because (1) social conditions are good; (2) there is widespread use of contraceptives and free abortions, reducing the number of unwanted babies; (3) many mothers work and leave their babies in day care institutions; and, (4) premature babies are kept in a neonatal ward until they are a certain weight and are released only when their parents are taught how to handle the newborn (Vesterdal, 1977). Perhaps the perceived lack of a problem contributes to the little consensus regarding a definition of child abuse in Scandinavian countries like Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and The Netherlands. Definitions range from acts of wilful abuse, to emotional deprivation (Tangen, 1977), to spanking and humiliation of children (Vinocur, 1980).

Reports on abuse in Scandinavian countries discuss intent, but without agreeing on whether it is an important part of a definition of abuse. A slight majority of the reports look at abuse from the societal/institutional level of analysis. There was also one report on

organizational abuse of children (the result of "studied non-observance" among medical professionals--Tangen, 1977).

Australia and Canada. There were too few studies of child abuse in Canada or Australia to allow meaningful comparisons of the definitions of child abuse used by researchers in these English speaking countries. Researchers in Australia did discuss, but did not agree on the importance of intent. Both studies of abuse followed the pattern in Great Britain of focusing only on the individual, caretaker-to-child, level of analysis (Nixon and Pearn, 1977; Oates et al., 1980).

There was no consensus among those studying abuse in Canada as to a definition of child maltreatment or the issue of intent. Kamerman reports that Canada and Great Britain are the two countries that follow the precedent established in the United States of distinguishing acts of abuse from acts of neglect (1975).

Researchers from, or who study, Canada have examined issues such as sexual abuse (Gammon, 1978) and the mass media as an agent of abuse that perpetuates and encourages violence between intimates (Beaulieu, 1978).

Third World Nations. Researchers studying abuse in Third World countries employed the broadest definitions of child abuse. A unique aspect of concern for and definitions of child abuse in research in Third World countries is the use of the societal/institutional level of analysis in approaching the abuse of children. Among the concerns of Third World investigators was "nutritionally battered" children (Bhattacharyya, 1979; Jinadu, 1980), a form of abuse not discussed in studies of abuse in any other area of the world. Abuse was also defined in a wider sense in the Third World than in other regions of the world. A major concern in Third World definitions of abuse is impaired development of children or even

death resulting from any adverse environmental factors that could have been prevented by way of scientific knowledge or adequate health services (Bhattacharyya, 1979).

Finally, the majority of definitions did not consider the issue of intent.

Summary. The problems of definitional variation and the resulting incomparability of research based on the various definitions, which has long plagued investigators in the United States, is evident on the larger scale of concern for child abuse around the world. We found some patterns of definitional consistency within specific countries or regions. But, the definitional problems found in research in the United States are amplified when cross-cultural variations of values of violence and children influence the generation of a definition of abuse. The problem faced by those concerned with cross-cultural comparison is that when considering incidence of child abuse and violence towards children they will be comparing apples, nuts, and bread. For those interested in theories of abuse, they will be stymied when they find explanations which focus on widely varying phenomenon.

Definitions of Spouse Abuse

There have been fewer reports on spouse abuse in other countries than child abuse. This discrepancy between the number of articles on spouse abuse as compared to child abuse could be an international reflection of the trend in the United States, where child abuse was identified as a significant social and family problem 10 years prior to the discovery of spouse abuse (Gelles, 1980).

In point of fact, spouse abuse is almost uniformly viewed as wife abuse in the world-wide, as well as U.S., literature (Chester and

Streather, 1972; Gayford, 1975; Lystad, 1975; Van Stolk, 1975; Brandon, 1976; Gregory, 1976; Haffner, 1977; Mushanga, 1977; Freeman, 1978; Loizos, 1978; Schlessinger, 1980; Byles, 1980). The definitions of wife abuse are much more consistent than those for child abuse. While the child abuse literature is bogged down in controversies over acts of abuse, neglect, failure to thrive and "at risk" and whether intent is a necessary element in deciding if an act is abusive, the spouse abuse literature is in overwhelming agreement that spouse abuse translates into physical abuse, with the intent of one spouse to injure or cause harm to the other.

Although there is much agreement on definitions in the spouse abuse literature, there is also some variation among researchers as to the severity of an act necessary to be defined as abusive, and whether spouse abuse occurs on the individual, organizational, or societal level.

Great Britain. Researchers in Great Britain, again the most prolific publishers on family violence, agree that physical violence is the primary factor in determining if a person is a victim of spousal violence. However, definitions of physical abuse vary from those who define abuse as "deliberate, severe and repeated demonstratable physical injury from the husband" (Gayford, 1975, Gregory, 1976) to those who include actual physical abuse or malign intent, both defined as "cruelty" by English divorce laws (Chester and Streather, 1972). The majority of researchers believe that spouse abuse occurs on individual, organizational, and societal levels (Chester and Streather, 1972; Brandon, 1976; Gregory, 1976; Freeman, 1978). Studies focusing on the individual level of analysis examine the characteristics of the abused, abuser, or abusive situation (Chester and Streather, 1972; Brandon, 1976; Gayford, 1975; Gregory, 1976; Freeman, 1978). Gregory (1976) has discussed the problems faced by

battered women due to organizational constraints imposed upon them from the law, police, inadequate housing, and financial difficulties. All of these factors work against abused women and force them to remain in abusive situations. Finally, researchers interpret the existence and continuance of domestic violence as being a result of societal attitudes and institutions that allow men to abuse their wives (Brandon, 1976; Gregory, 1976; Freeman, 1978, Dobash and Dobash, 1979). These attitudes support the idea of the "sanctity of marriage" that insulates family violence from public awareness.

Canada. In Canada, researchers agree that spouse abuse means physical violence with intent to injure. Abusive acts range from actual or threatened abuse (Byles, 1980), to slapping, pushing, and punching (Schlessinger, 1980) to deliberate, severe and repeated abuse (Van Stolk, 1976) to murder (Schlessinger, 1980). As in Great Britain, researchers examine spouse abuse from the individual, organizational, and societal levels of analysis. Gerson (1978) and Van Stolk (1976) investigate abuse between spouses on the individual level by analyzing the role that alcohol (Gerson, 1978) and pregnancy (Van Stolk, 1976) play in precipitating violence. Byles (1980) delves into the organizational role the police play in uncovering and responding to cases of domestic disturbances, and Schlessinger (1980) and Van Stolk (1976) focus upon the history of male dominance that has historically granted men the right and duty to beat women. The definition and level of analysis utilized in Canada is very similar to that in Great Britain.

Other European Countries. Researchers in European countries, such as Germany, Portugal, Sicily, Greece, and Cyprus define spouse abuse as physical abuse with either intent to injure (Haffner, 1977) or as necessary

to maintain the moral code of the society (Loizos, 1978). Unfortunately, the researchers failed to provide concise definitions as to which acts constituted abuse, beyond such terms as "wife abuse" or "wife-beating". Abuse against women is viewed as existing on the societal level, again, due to cultural attitudes that grant men permission to use aggressive force against their wives (Haffner, 1977; Loizos, 1978). In Mediterranean Countries, the use of violence by husbands towards their wives and children is considered necessary and proper in order to preserve the family's integrity.

In summary, spouse abuse is vaguely defined as physical abuse with intent to injure or control. Abuse is examined primarily from the societal level of analysis. In many countries the societal taboo against the public awareness of brutal acts of violence against women by their husbands, is thought to be so strong as to allow the existence of such behavior without negatively sanctioning violence toward wives (Haffner, 1977).

Japan and India. Researchers of spousal violence in Japan and India (Kumagai, 1980; Kumagai and Straus, 1979) place equal emphasis on the occurrence of both physical and verbal abuse in resolving family conflict. Researchers report lower rates of spousal violence in Japan and India, compared to the United States and explain this by examining the differences in the cultural context of the two countries. The dominant cultural context which is used to explain the low level of conjugal violence in Japan, is described as a more traditional and reserved way of life in Japan, with emphasis placed on male supremacy and traditional sex-role identification.

India, characteristically a non-violent society, places great emphasis on the traditional, subordinate role of women.

The higher rates of conjugal violence in the United States are explained as characteristic of the more expressive American culture with its movement toward equal rights between the sexes (Kumagai, 1980).

Africa. Researchers of spouse abuse in Africa (Mushanga, 1977) have investigated varying rates of victimization of women and rates of female homicide, from a variety of tribes throughout the continent. The exact definition of "victimization" was not disclosed and therefore, we can only guess at the types of behavior included in such a vague description. Abuse in Africa is seen as occurring on the societal level, due to the cultural values that legitimize spouse abuse as a way of resolving conflict (Mushanga, 1977).

Summary. Researchers in England and Canada employ the broadest definition of spouse abuse, ranging from actual to threatened acts of violence. These acts vary in severity from slaps to murder and victimization is believed to occur on all levels of society. Japan and India fall in the middle of the definitional continuum. Although the researchers take into consideration both verbal and physical abuse between spouses, they define abuse as occurring on the societal level, due to the varying cultural context of each country. African cultures and European countries employ the narrowest definition of spouse abuse. It was impossible to determine the range of acts that constituted abusive behavior. In both examples, abuse is examined from the societal level, focusing on prevalent attitudes that allow and even encourage husbands to abuse their wives.

METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Methods

Child Abuse. Researchers have employed 5 different approaches to gathering and presenting data on child abuse in other countries:

(1) Position papers; (2) Survey research; (3) Quasi-experimental designs; (4) Clinical case studies; and, (5) Literature reviews.

The position paper is the most commonly used approach for discussing child abuse. Position papers purport to give current or historical accounts of the causes of child abuse in various countries. It is debatable whether this technique is an acceptable scientific approach, since many of the researchers who employ this technique draw conclusions based upon accounts of societal events without using either empirical evidence or developed social theory to substantiate their conclusions. The position paper is usually lacking in "hard" data and is essentially based on the researcher's non-systematic observations of social conditions that might lead to the abuse of children (Beaulieu, 1978; Olmesdahl, 1978; Loening, 1981; Jinadu, 1980; Oyemade, 1980; Mahmood, 1978; Tauber et al., 1977; Maroulis, 1979; Vinocur, 1980; Gurry, 1977; Rosendorf, 1981).

Position papers are the most frequent form for discussing child abuse in Third World countries (Olmesdahl, 1978; Oyemade, 1980; Loening, 1981; Jinadu, 1980; Mahmood, 1978), but they also are used, though with much less frequency, in Canada (Beaulieu, 1978), Scandinavia (Vinocur, 1980), Greece (Maroulis, 1979), and Italy (Tauber et al., 1977). Authors of position papers are primarily interested in describing what they see as causes of child abuse. The purported causes range from the mass media's visual depiction of family violence (Beaulieu, 1978), to recent urbanization and industrialization trends in developing countries (Oyemade, 1980; Loening, 1981; Jinadu, 1980; Mahmood, 1978; Maroulis, 1979), to trying to break the cycle of violence by prohibiting parents from using any form of physical punishment, even spanking, against their children (Vinocur, 1980).

Survey research is the second most widely used approach to child abuse. Survey designs are used by researchers in a variety of countries, including Great Britain (Roberts and Hawton, 1980; Speight et al., 1979; Buchanan and Oliver, 1979), Africa (Fraser and Kilbride, 1980), Scandinavia (van Rees, 1978), Australia (Nixon and Pearn, 1977), and Scotland (Paterson, 1977). With the exception of Christoffel et al.'s (1980) review of 52 countries and their rates of childhood homicide and Kamerman's (1977) cross-cultural study on perspectives on child abuse and neglect, other researchers have drawn their samples from a single country and typically a single medical institution in the country. The limits of the sampling techniques--that is, drawing the sample from cases of abuse seen in either a hospital or therapeutic institution--call into question whether the sample is representative of the problem of abuse. No evidence is provided in any of the studies that the institution selected or cases of abuse examined are representative of other medical institutions or cases of abuse in the country.

Quasi-experimental designs rank third among modes of research designs used to examine abuse in other countries. This type of design, while not employing random assignment or manipulation of the independent variable, does utilize natural experimental and control groups. In this type of research, the experimental groups consist of children officially identified as victims of abuse, while the control (comparison) groups are children (sometimes matched on such characteristics as age, race, and sex) who have not been publicly identified as abused. Quasi-experimental designs are used primarily in Great Britain (Lynch, 1978; Smith et al., 1973; Smith et al., 1973; Hyman, 1977; Smith and Hanson, 1974; Lynch and Roberts, 1977), although researchers in Australia (Oates et al., 1980, and Africa (van Staden, 1979) have also used this design.

Researchers have used quasi-experimental designs to examine causes of child abuse. By using control groups, they hope to discover whether a particular variable (e.g. stress) is significantly more common in abusive than non-abusive families (Smith et al., 1973; Smith et al., 1973; Hyman, 1977; Smith and Hanson, 1974; Lynch and Roberts, 1977; Oates et al., 1980). Quasi-experimental designs have also been used in follow-up studies of abused children (Lynch, 1978; van Staden, 1979). Follow-up studies investigate victims of child abuse years after the abusive incident in order to monitor mental and physical development (compared to non-abused children).

Clinical case studies present detailed descriptions of specific incidents of child abuse. These descriptions are predominantly medical in nature and provide information on the abused, abuser, and abusive situation (Oliver, 1975; Guthkelch, 1971; Miniford, 1981; Rogers et al., 1976; Bhattacharyya, 1979; Tangen, 1977). Clinical case studies are usually based on very small numbers of cases which severely restricts their generalizability. The case studies we reviewed had sample sizes ranging from one (Miniford, 1981) to 23 cases (Guthkelch, 1971). Researchers from Great Britain (Oliver, 1975; Guthkelch, 1971; Miniford, 1981; Rogers et al., 1976), India (Bhattacharyya, 1971), and Scandinavia (Tangen, 1977) have employed this design.

Researchers have used clinical case studies as a means of helping physicians become more aware of types of cases of child abuse, including poisoning (Rogers et al., 1976), suffocation (Miniford, 1981), or shaking a child severely enough to cause subdural haematoma (Oliver, 1975).

Bhattacharyya (1971) uses 13 cases to arrive at the "causes" of child abuse. Although he concludes that urbanization, the breakdown of the extended family, and increasing numbers of women entering the work force

contribute to abuse of children in India, his data do not really provide him with the necessary information to draw such conclusions. Tangen (1977) uses clinical investigations to demonstrate the mismanagement of 12 cases of child abuse by doctors who do not recognize abuse as the life threatening situation that it is.

A few of the articles on child abuse, . ther than presenting primary data, are reviews of the child abuse literature in particular countries. Researchers in England (Bamford, 1976), Canada (Gammon, 1978), Scandinavia (Vesterdal, 1977), and France (Straus and Girodet, 1977) have utilized this method in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the incidence rates (Vesterdal, 1977; Straus and Girodet, 1977), treatment (Bamford, 1976; Straus and Girodet, 1977), and psychological damage abuse victims have incurred (Straus and Girodet, 1977). Gammon (1978) carefully criticizes the currently available research, by noting problems with definitional inconsistency regarding abuse and neglect. She also analyzes the variety of theoretical approaches taken, and ends by providing her own Interaction Model of child abuse, thereby adding her own contribution to the literature.

Spouse Abuse. In contrast to child abuse research approaches, literature reviews are the dominant approach to the study of spouse abuse around the world (Lystad, 1975; Gregory, 1976; Brandon, 1976; Mushanga, 1977; Freeman, 1978; Schlessinger, 1980). Researchers in Great Britain (Gregory, 1976; Brandon, 1976; Freeman, 1978), Canada (Schlessinger, 1980), and Africa (Mushanga, 1977) have primarily reviewed incidence statistics. Unfortunately, the researchers have not been able to provide valid or reliable data on the number of cases of abuse of women that occur each year. The statistics are typically confined to reports of rates of homicide

(Lystad, 1975; Mushanga, 1977) or they are projections from a very select population of female assault victims (Gregory, 1976; Schlessinger, 1980; Freeman, 1978).

Researchers have also reviewed the causes of spouse abuse (Lystad, 1975; Gregory, 1976; Brandon, 1976; Mushanga, 1977), the management of cases of abuse by police and the courts (Gregory, 1976; Schlessinger, 1980), and have given detailed descriptions of the "typical" abuse victim (Gregory, 1976).

The second most popular design, survey research, has been used in Great Britain (Gayford, 1975; Chester and Streather, 1972) and Canada (Van Stolk, 1976; Gerson, 1978; Byles, 1980). Survey researchers examine the causes of spouse abuse (Van Stolk, 1976; Gerson, 1978; Gayford, 1975) and the management of cases by the police and courts (Byles, 1980; Chester and Streather, 1972). Gayford (1975) and Byles (1980) also provide detailed descriptions of the forms, patterns, and likelihood of abuse. It should be noted, however, that all of the researchers have relied on samples of women who have been publicly recognized as victims by either the police, courts, or by women's shelters. Research on child and spouse abuse in the United States has clearly demonstrated that those cases which come to public attention represent a skewed and biased portion of the population of abuse victims (Gelles, 1975; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980). Research in the United States has also shown that social, racial, and economic factors influence who is labeled as abused (Newberger et al., 1977; Turbett and O'Toole, 1980).

Among the more sophisticated surveys of abuse in other countries are the studies of conflict resolution between spouses in Japan, India, and the United States (Kumagai and Straus, 1979; Kumagai, 1980). These surveys

were among the few to employ comparison groups and cross-cultural designs. The investigators studied high school seniors from the three countries and asked them to report on rates of verbal and physical violence between spouses. Also studied were the factors related to violent behavior. The data on spouse abuse from these surveys support Taylor and Newberger's (1979) claim for lower rates of child abuse in Japan than the United States.

Position papers were much less common in the spouse abuse literature than the child abuse literature. Haffner (1977) described the birth of the movement to build shelters for battered women in Germany, while Loizos (1978) described the historical significance of the "moral code" in perpetuating family violence in Mediterranean countries. Loizos postulated on the causes of abuse, while Haffner (1977) reported on the incidence and management of cases of spouse abuse. Haffner also discussed the lack of awareness of spouse abuse. While neither article contained "hard" scientific evidence, both provide us with glimpses into the impact of cultural values on spouse abuse.

We found no examples of either quasi-experimental designs or clinical case studies in the literature on spouse abuse. Brandon (1976) does note that the data he presents are based on some of his own clinical observations, but he fails to report on the number or nature of the observations.

Summary. A variety of methods of data collection and analysis have been used by students of both child and spouse abuse in countries around the world. These methods are, by and large, similar to methods used to study these issues in the United States and the problems with the methods and conclusions are similar as well. The studies of family violence in other countries come with a variety of limitations which are similar to those found in research in the United States. The limitations include;

(1) failure to use comparison groups in surveys; (2) small non-representative samples; (3) samples frequently based only on officially recognized cases of abuse; (4) samples drawn from a single source--hospital, shelter, institution; and (5) conclusions are often post hoc or without empirical or theoretical support.

Theories

Child Abuse. Theoretical approaches to child abuse in the United States were characterized largely by medical and intra-individual models during the early years of research. Gradually, these models gave way to broader approaches which emphasized social-psychological variables (Gelles, 1973). Although some noted students of abuse have approached the problem from a socio-cultural level of analysis (e.g. Gil, 1970), theoretical models which attempt to explain child abuse in the United States using macro-level variables have been quite rare.

In contrast to theoretical approaches in the United States, the most widely applied model we found in the world-wide child abuse literature was a "socio-structural" model. An approach emphasizing social structures, norms, values, and institutional arrangements has been the dominant theoretical approach used by researchers in Africa and India (Olmesdahl, 1978; Oyemade, 1980; Loening, 1981; Fraser and Kilbride, 1980; Mahmood, 1978; Bhattacharyya, 1979; Rosendorf, 1981; Maroulis, 1979). Researchers studying and attempting to explain abuse in developing nations have drawn on a social disorganization approach and have seen abuse as arising from changes in traditional tribal ways of life. Researchers who apply the socio-cultural model in developed nations have focused on the changing demands placed on the family by society and the role of the media in

creating the unreasonable demands on the family (van Rees, 1978). The cultural legitimization of family violence has also been proposed as a significant explanatory factor (Beaulieu, 1978). Previously, we cited Vesterdal's (1977) proposition that low rates of child abuse in Denmark were due to good social conditions.

The second most widely used theoretical approach to child abuse world-wide has been the social-psychological model of maltreatment. Here researchers have located the source of abuse primarily in mother-child interactions as a result of failures to bond (Lynch and Roberts, 1977), abnormalities in newborns--such as low birth weights, prematurity, or congenital defects--(Smith and Hanson, 1974; Oates, Davis, and Ryan, 1980), and other "inappropriate" mother-child interactions (Hyman, 1977; Gurry, 1977). Others have discussed abuse arising out of parental hisharmony or domestic upheaval (Nixon and Pearn, 1977; Rogers et al., 1976; Oliver, 1975). Finally, violence towards children is also seen as arising from parental backgrounds, which include violence, broken homes, and poverty (Maroulis, 1979; Jinadu, 1980). These social-psychological theories have been applied in England (Smith and Hanson, 1974; Lynch and Roberts, 1977; Oliver, 1975; Rogers et al., 1976; Hyman, 1977), Africa (Jinadu, 1980), Canada (Gammon, 1978), Australia (Oates, Davis, and Ryan, 1980; Gurry, 1977; Nixon and Pearn, 1977), and Greece (Maroulis, 1979).

Medical and intra-individual models locate the causes of abuse within the individual (e.g. alcohol, psychopathy, sociopathy, mental illness, etc.). Authors who approach abuse using a medical model often aim at goals other than explaining abuse. Some have used this model in an attempt to sensitize other physicians to the possibility of abuse in cases of

poisoning, suffocation, submersion, and subdural haematoma resulting from severe shaking (Rogers et al., 1976; Miniford, 1981; Nixon and Pearn, 1977; Oliver, 1978; Guthkelch, 1971). Others have applied the model to assess the mental development of children after incidents of abuse (Buchanan and Oliver, 1979; van Staden, 1979).

The medical model is most widely used by investigators of abuse in Great Britain (Oliver, 1975; Guthkelch, 1971; Rogers et al., 1976; Miniford, 1981; Buchanan and Oliver, 1979; Bamford, 1976). The medical model is also used in studies of abuse in Africa (van Staden, 1979), Australia (Nixon and Pearn, 1977), and Scotland (Paterson, 1977).

Spouse Abuse. Students of spouse abuse, both in the United States and around the world, have approached the subject primarily from a social-psychological perspective. Social learning theory has been widely applied in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain (Schlessinger, 1980; Gayford, 1975; Gregory, 1976). Kumagai (1980) has used field theory to study spousal violence in Japan, and has tested catharsis theory with Straus in studies of spousal violence in three countries (1979). Differential association theory, as adapted from theories of deviance, has been tested (Mushanga, 1977), and researchers have also considered the impact of marital communication and pregnancy in cases of spouse abuse (Brandon, 1976; Van Stolk, 1976). Social psychological models have been used in both developing and developed countries.

Researchers have also located the causes of spouse abuse in social structural and cultural variables. There is a strong tradition in studies of wife abuse to trace the primary generative sources of abuse to cultural attitudes and assumptions which support and legitimize the use of violence towards women (Brandon, 1976; Gregory, 1976; Loizos, 1978; Lystad, 1975;

Dobash and Dobash, 1979). While investigators in the United States have also focused on cultural attitudes and patriarchy as causes of abuse, this theory has a stronger tradition in Great Britain and Mediterranean countries (Loizos, 1978).

Only two of the earliest publications on spouse abuse in the United States employed a medical-psychopathological model (Schultz, 1960; Snell, Rosenwald, and Robey, 1964). We found no studies of spouse abuse in the world-wide literature which used a medical model. There were, however, a number of investigators who located the sources of abuse in drugs and alcohol (Gerson, 1978; Brandon, 1976). Both investigators use the traditional argument that alcohol and drugs serve as disinhibitors which break down the restraints against violent behavior.

Summary. There appears to be a much wider application of social structural models of family violence to the issues of child and spouse abuse in countries around the world than has been the case in research in the United States. This could be a result of research on child and spouse abuse in other countries beginning after intra-individual models had fallen into disrepute in the United States. However, another plausible explanation is that the dominant paradigm used by researchers in Europe and Third World countries for studying social problems such as family violence, does not attempt to locate the problem in "bad people" but rather in social relations or social structures.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

As we noted earlier, what we know about the nature, extent, patterns, causes, and other aspects of family violence around the world is largely

dependent on the degree to which specific societies recognize the existence of forms of family violence or define violence in homes as problematic and deviant. As norms and attitudes vary, so do the research efforts, data collection mechanisms, and thus, the knowledge generated about family violence.

Existence and Extent

Child Abuse. Much of the early knowledge about the existence and extent of child abuse in the United States came as a result of the Federal Government urging the states to pass mandatory reporting laws. These laws, enacted in all 50 states by the end of the 1960's, not only allowed for estimates of extent of abuse, but provided possible pools of subjects for research into the patterns, causes, and consequences of child abuse. Kamerman, in her cross-cultural review of social service systems in eight countries, noted that no firm data on the incidence of child abuse existed in the countries she examined (1975). Moreover, only the United States and Canada had specific legislation dealing with child abuse and programs developed for the identification of abuse. Canada, France, West Germany, Israel, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States had legislation on child neglect.

Our review of the literature on child abuse in other countries found considerably less concern for estimating the incidence of abuse than there has been in the United States. Even before there were mandatory reporting statutes and incidence studies, researchers in the United States tried to estimate how big a problem abuse was. The only example of incidence estimating we found was in a discussion of abuse in Italy where the authors applied Kempe's United States incidence estimates to Italy, and concluded

that one would expect 3 or 4 thousand cases of abuse per year in Italy (Tauber, Meda, and Vitro, 1977).

Investigators have reported that child abuse and violence towards children is most common in developed countries (Christoffel, Liu, and Stamler, 1980; Taylor and Newberger, 1979). Violence and abuse are thought be to rare in developing nations (Christoffel, Liu, and Stamler, 1980; Fraser and Kilbride, 1980), Denmark (Vesterdal, 1977), China, Russia, Poland, Japan, and Italy (Taylor and Newberger, 1979).

While estimates of the incidence of abuse are rare, a number of researchers have voiced their concern that social change, urbanization, industrialization, and population growth has led to a breakdown in traditional cultural values and the traditional family structure which has caused an increase in the problem of abuse and neglect (Oyemade, 1980; Jinadu, 1980; Loening, 1981; Maroulis, 1979; Bhattacharyya, 1979). These concerns are strongest in developing nations and Third World countries.

Spouse Abuse. As is the case in the United States, few countries actually record data on wife beating. Some incidence estimates have been made for Great Britain. Gregory (1978) cites Marsden and Owens's estimate of wife beating occurring in between 1 in 100 to 1 in 200 marriages (1975). Gregory also cites Ashley (1973) who believes there are between 20,000 and 50,000 cases of wife beating each year in England. While Van Stolk reported that Canada did not record wife beating as late as 1971, Schlessinger estimates that there are 50,000 battered wives in Metro Toronto (1980). Schlessinger also notes that between 10% and 30% of all police cases in Canada are related to family disputes.

Perhaps the only comparative data on violence towards wives are homicide statistics for various countries. Lystad notes that 70% of the murders

in Portugal occur in the home, while the single largest category of homicide in Denmark is among family members (1975).

Kumagai and Straus have conducted the only cross-cultural study of spousal violence and report that there is less husband to wife violence in Japan and India than in the United States (1979). The rates of wife to husband violence are found to be about equal in the three countries studied by Kumagai and Straus (1979).

Even with the absence of reliable base line data on spousal violence around the world, many investigators have concluded that women are the most likely victims of spousal violence in many if not all countries (Loizos, 1978; Dobash and Dobash, 1979).

Factors Associated With Family Violence

Child Abuse. As with research on child abuse in the United States, child abuse researchers in other countries have placed considerable emphasis on psychological factors. Low IQ, psychopathy, abnormal EEG's, emotional disturbances, psychiatric factors, and abnormal personalities have been identified as traits of abusing parents in England and Greece (Smith et al., 1973; Smith et al., 1973; Lynch and Roberts, 1977; Rogers et al., 1976, Maroulis, 1979).

Researchers in England and Australia have found support for the notion that abuse is more common in lower socioeconomic groups (Nixon and Pearn, 1977; Smith et al., 1973).

Echoing the theory that the factors which relate to abuse in the United States are also found in other countries, Bhattacharyya (1979) states that the causes of abuse in India do not differ from causes in developed countries.

There are some interesting differences between research findings from the developed world compared to data gathered in developing nations. Mahmood (1978) reports that adolescents are more likely to be abused in India and Arabia, in contrast to the pattern of young children being the most vulnerable to abuse in other countries (Smith and Hanson, 1974). More importantly, as we noted a number of times earlier, researchers studying abuse in developing nations place considerable emphasis on social change, social disorganization, and cultural attitudes towards children in framing their theories and explanations of child abuse. Social change and the resulting changes in family, tribal, and social organization are seen as important factors causing increases in the occurrence of child abuse in Africa, Greece, and other developing nations (Fraser and Kilbride, 1980). Taylor and Newberger (1979), examining child abuse and neglect cross-culturally, and Fraser and Kilbride (1980), studying abuse in Samoa, both note that abuse is less likely to take place in societies which have strong positive cultural values attached to children. Regrettably, these authors provide very little in the way of hard, empirical, comparative data to support their conlcusions.

Spouse Abuse. Studies of spouse abuse in other countries also developed parallel to research on spouse abuse in the United States. Just as psychopathological factors were given minimal attention in studies of violence towards women in the United States, so too are there few, if any, studies done in other countries which examine personality, emotional, or other psychological correlates with wife beating. Researchers in Canada, however, have considered alcohol misuse and abuse a prime factor accompanying violence towards Canadian wives (Van Stolk, 1976; Gerson, 1978; Byles, 1980).

Similarities between findings in the United States and other countries include abuse being more common in lower class households (Gayford, 1975), the special vulnerability of pregnant women to abuse (VanStolk, 1976), and the intergenerational transmission of violence (Gregory, 1976).

A major variation from findings in the United States was Kumagai's report that social class was not related to spousal violence in Japan (1980). Kumagai found that a husband's interactional resources were more important than class or power in explaining violence towards wives.

Again, as we noted earlier, European, and African studies of the abuse of women place a great deal of emphasis on cultural factors which lead to and are related to wife abuse. Mushanga (1977) notes that cultures which strongly negatively sanction wife abuse have low rates of homicide. Loizos (1978), commenting on spouse abuse in Greece, Portugal, Sicily, and Cyprus, explains that violence is considered a legitimate means of punishing women who violate cultural norms concerning family rules and behavior. Dobash and Dobash, citing extensively from historical and cross-cultural documents, make a strong case that women are uniformly the prime targets for family violence as a result of cultural values arising from patriarchy.

Summary. One draws conclusions about the patterns of factors related to family violence around the world very tentatively. In many cases, the definitions of violence employed by different investigators are not comparable, nor are their research designs and methods of operationalizing their definitions. Often, statements about which factors are or are not associated with abuse and violence are based on sketchy data, if they are based on any data at all. Just as methodological and definitional problems limit our knowledge about the extent of family violence around the world, so too do they limit our understandings of the similarities and differences in the factors found to be related to violence in various cultures.

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of the many limitations and drawbacks to the research on family violence around the world, there are some areas where we can draw conclusions.

First, family violence is certainly not confined to the United States, nor for that matter, confined to families in developed, western, industrialized nations.

Second, there is considerable variation in the likelihood of families being violent from country to country. The accumulated evidence from both empirical studies and position papers is that child abuse and spouse abuse are probably more common in western, industrialized, developed nations. Developing countries also seem to have problems of abuse and violence, although these are thought to be grounded in the social disorganization caused by modernization and resultant changes in family, clan, tribal, and social institutions. China is frequently described as a society with little or no problem with abuse. Scandinavian countries are also pointed to as having little child abuse.

Given the variation in extent of family violence around the world, it is quite possible that violence is not only not confined to the United States, but that the rates of family violence in the United States are not the highest in the world!

Explanations for the variation of family violence from culture to culture emphasize cultural differences in attitudes towards, and value placed on, children and the cultural appropriateness of using violence as a means of punishing perceived deviant behavior. Such cultural explanations are

rarely empirically tested or examined, and seem to take the form of post hoc explanations for the absence or presence of family violence in particular cultures.

It is difficult, at present, to go much beyond these conclusions. It is tempting to point to the similarities in factors related to family violence around the world. However, one must be mindful that these similarities may arise because researchers in other countries are relying on their reading of the extensive literature on family violence in the United States to frame both their own thinking and their research. We see the influence of American research on other studies of family violence when investigators apply incidence rates from the United States to European countries, or when assumptions about family violence in other countries are based on the results of research in the United States.

What is missing in our examination of the literature on family violence around the world, are cross-cultural studies of family violence. With few exceptions, nearly all the research we reviewed were studies of family violence in a single country. Given the methodological and definitional variations we found and discussed in this paper, it is nearly impossible to directly compare the results of a study of child abuse in one country with research in a second or third country. It is often highly unlikely that the investigators used the same nominal and operational definitions of violence and abuse.

What we need then, in the way of more knowledge about family violence around the world, is a knowledge base built on cross-cultural research using precise and replicable definitions, measures, and research designs. But even more than this, we need cross-cultural research on family

violence which empirically examines the factors which many investigators believe cause variation in the extent and patterns of family violence. Truly useful cross-cultural research on family violence should investigate social structural variations, family structural variations, and variations in cultural meanings and norms concerning children and family life.

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